

# Hawaii VFC News

SPRING ISSUE

A PUBLICATION OF THE HAWAII IMMUNIZATION BRANCH

*"Hawaii VFC News" is a quarterly publication distributed to all participating Vaccines for Children (VFC) providers. Its purpose is to address VFC-related issues, provide general immunization information, and keep you up-to-date with the latest program changes. If you have any suggestions for future newsletter topics, or if you would like to share relevant immunization information with other VFC providers through our newsletter, please contact Mardelle Gustilo at (808) 586-4587 or via e-mail at [mardelle.gustilo@doh.hawaii.gov](mailto:mardelle.gustilo@doh.hawaii.gov). Neighbor Islands, call toll-free 1-800-933-4832.*

## VFC FOCUS: VACCINE STORAGE REQUIREMENTS

VFC Providers must have appropriate equipment that can store vaccine and maintain proper conditions in order to ensure VFC vaccines are not exposed to temperatures outside of the accepted ranges so that they remain viable through their expiration dates. By now, most Hawaii VFC Providers are aware **dorm-style refrigerators** (small combination freezer-refrigerator unit with a freezer compartment inside the refrigerator) **are not allowed** for the storage of VFC vaccine and have replaced this type of vaccine storage unit with a combination refrigerator/freezer that has separate exterior doors for the refrigerator and freezer sections.

However, information posted on the CDC's VFC vaccine storage and handling webpage provide updated guidance on acceptable VFC vaccine storage units. (Please refer to Appendix C of the "Pink Book")

### **Acceptable vaccine storage units are:**

- Stand-alone refrigerators
- Stand-alone freezers
- Combination units, e.g., household type refrigerator/freezer units (must have a separate exterior door for the refrigerator section and a separate exterior door for the freezer section AND also have **separate thermostat controls** for the refrigerator and freezer)
- Able to provide enough space to store the largest number of doses expected at one time (including influenza season), allowing for vaccine storage at least 2-3 inches away from the wall, floor, other boxes and away from cold air vents (**NOTE:** Vaccine must not be stored in the doors or in vegetable bins)
- Able to maintain required vaccine storage temperatures year-round
- Are automatic frost-free
- Used only for vaccine storage

This new standard will begin to be fully enforced by the Hawaii VFC Program on July 1, 2012. As VFC Site Visits are conducted before this date, providers needing to replace their vaccine storage unit for any reason will be advised to purchase a model that meets the new standard set by the CDC. Please contact the VFC Program for assistance in selecting an appropriate refrigerator/freezer. We cannot endorse any specific models, but we can provide details for refrigerators with separate thermostat controls that have been purchased by VFC providers.

## SAVE THE DATE

**ASK THE  
LOCAL  
EXPERT  
MAY 22, 2012**

Are you storing vaccines properly? Do you know what actions to take during and after a power failure? Do you need a new refrigerator, but unsure which models are acceptable?

Get answers on **Proper Vaccine Storage and Handling** during the first, *Ask the Local Expert*, continuing education session:

- Via conference call
- Tuesday, May 22, 2012
- 12 noon to 1:00 pm.

Call in from the convenience of your office or home. Please see the attached flyer for details and registration. Call-in information will be provided after your registration form is received.

This session is being offered by the Hawaii Department of Health Immunization Branch.

## PLEASE Protect Your Vaccine!

In February 2012, the Hawaii VFC program received over \$10,000.00 worth of spoiled VFC vaccine from a VFC Provider. The spoilage occurred because the temperature in the vaccine storage unit was too cold. The temperature excursion occurred in December 2011, but the only action documented on the temperature log by the provider's vaccine coordinator was the adjustment of the thermostat control in the refrigerator and the time the temperature was within the acceptable range.

Aside from the obvious waste of **our** taxpayer dollars, there are several other issues and consequences we must consider:

1. At the time of the temperature excursion, neither VFC Program staff nor any vaccine manufacturers were notified. VFC vaccine administration continued over the next six weeks until the temperature excursion was discovered by a VFC Field Reviewer during routine follow-up.
2. We all know vaccines are fragile and easily damaged when they are not properly stored and handled. It is possible children who received the VFC vaccine on and after the date of the temperature excursion are not provided the protection they need against the diseases for which the vaccines are indicated.
3. The provider must now review patient records for children who received VFC vaccine on and after the date of the temperature excursion. Parents of children who received VFC vaccine during this period should be contacted and advised to return to the office so their children can be re-vaccinated to ensure they are properly immunized.
4. Parents expect that their children are properly protected and may not immediately recognize the signs and symptoms of a vaccine-preventable disease should their child fall ill. Unprotected children may cause the spread of vaccine-preventable disease to unprotected community members and those who are immune-compromised. Therefore it is very important they receive viable and effective vaccines.

PLEASE protect your vaccine! Hawaii VFC Field Reviewers are available by phone whenever you have questions or need help. VFC Educational Site Visits can be scheduled when there is staff turn-over or anytime a provider or vaccine coordinator requests a visit. You may call the VFC Program at (808) 586-8300 to request an educational site visit.

## VTrckS UPDATE

Immunization Branch staff have been busy working on the design documents necessary to implement VFC vaccine ordering and inventory reporting modules within the Hawaii Immunization Registry (HIR).

The next steps will include the actual system "build" and user testing.

If you would like to assist us in testing the HIR VFC vaccine ordering and inventory reporting modules and would like the opportunity to provide feedback, please contact the Hawaii Immunization Registry Help Desk at (808) 586-4665, 1-888-447-1023 (toll-free) or [registryhelp@doh.hawaii.gov](mailto:registryhelp@doh.hawaii.gov).

The HIR VFC vaccine ordering and inventory modules are being built to implement the Vaccine Tracking System (VTrckS), which is a critical component of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Vaccine Management Business Improvement Project (VMBIP). VTrckS is an information technology system that will integrate the entire publicly-funded vaccine supply chain from purchasing and ordering to distribution of the vaccine. VTrckS is anticipated to launch in Hawaii in March 2013.

Prior to implementation of VTrckS, VFC providers will be transitioned to an online vaccine ordering system. All Hawaii VFC providers will enter their vaccine orders directly into the Hawaii Immunization Registry (HIR). Vaccine orders received through HIR will be processed by Hawaii VFC Program staff and submitted electronically to the CDC through VTrckS.

## VFC Frequently Asked Questions

***If a child has both QUEST and private insurance, is the child eligible to receive VFC vaccines? What if the QUEST insurance is the child's secondary insurance?***

Yes, the child would be considered VFC-eligible. All children who have Medicaid (includes QUEST) as a secondary insurance are covered by VFC. The state Medicaid agency will pay the claim for administration fee and seek reimbursement from the primary insurance. As long as the individual has Medicaid insurance, he/she is eligible to receive VFC vaccines.

## VIS UPDATES

Please note the following Vaccine Information Statements (VIS) have been recently updated:

Hepatitis B	2/2/12
HPV	2/22/12
Polio	11/8/11
Td/Tdap	1/24/12

Visit CDC's website for more information:  
<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/vis/default.htm>



## HAVE YOU HIRd?

Have you heard that the Hawaii Immunization Registry (HIR) accepts data transfers from electronic medical/health record systems (EMR/EHRs)?

It's true. Hawaii Pacific Health (HPH) recently initiated electronic data transfers from their EPIC EHR system to HIR. Demographic and immunization information for patients vaccinated at any of HPH's facilities is submitted to HIR weekly. In addition, providers utilizing HPH's Health Advantage Connect automatically have their data submitted to HIR through this process.

What's the benefit of sending information to HIR electronically? Populating HIR with data from EMR/EHRs builds more complete patient immunization records in HIR, contributing to a more robust and useful system. In addition, providers submitting electronic data transfers to HIR no longer are required to complete and submit VFC Vaccine Administration Visit Records (VAVRs).

For assistance in enhancing your EMR/EHR to be able to exchange data with HIR, contact the Hawaii Pacific Regional Extension Center at (808) 441-1344 or visit their website at [www.hawaiihi.org/rec](http://www.hawaiihi.org/rec).

For more information about HIR or to enroll as an HIR-participating provider, e-mail [registryhelp@doh.hawaii.gov](mailto:registryhelp@doh.hawaii.gov) or call 586-4665 (Oahu), 1-888-447-1023 (Neighbor Islands).

## Talk to the Doc

**We've been using Pentacel® (DTaP-IPV/Hib) for the 4-6 year old DTaP and IPV booster dose. Is this okay?**

No. Pentacel®, a combination product containing DTaP, inactivated polio, and Hib vaccines, is licensed only for doses 1 through 4 of the DTaP series among children 6 weeks through 4 years of age. Pentacel® should not be used for the 5<sup>th</sup> dose of the DTaP series or for children ages 5 years or older, regardless of the number of prior doses of the component vaccines.

Similarly, Pediarix®, a combination product containing DTaP, hepatitis B, and inactivated polio vaccines, should not be used for booster doses of DTaP and IPV after the three dose primary series. Pediarix® is licensed for use in children ages 6 weeks through 6 years for doses 1, 2, and 3 of the DTaP primary series and should be followed with 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> doses of DTaP and a 4<sup>th</sup> dose of IPV at appropriate ages.

## Student Health Requirements Hepatitis B Vaccination for School Entry

Hepatitis B vaccination – Minimum Age & Intervals between Doses [as outlined in the Hawaii Administrative Rules (HAR) Title 11, Chapter 157]

1<sup>st</sup> dose: Birth

2<sup>nd</sup> dose: 4 weeks after first dose

3<sup>rd</sup> dose: 8 weeks after second dose and  
4 months after the first dose  
but not before age 6 months

To access the (HAR) online go to:

<http://hawaii.gov/health/Immunization/Documents/11-157.pdf>) Contact the DOH Immunization Branch at (808) 586-8313 for more information or questions regarding student health requirements.

## VACCINE OF THE QUARTER: PERTUSSIS-CONTAINING VACCINES

CDC defines a pertussis case as having 'cough illness lasting at least 2 weeks with paroxysms of coughing, inspiratory "whoop," or posttussive vomiting; and without other apparent cause.' Everyone above 6 weeks of age is eligible to receive pertussis-containing vaccine for protection against pertussis. A series of 5 DTaP doses is recommended for pediatric patients under age 7 while 1 Tdap dose is recommended for adolescents and adults. Up-to-date status on recommended doses is emphasized especially for people in close contact with infants (health care workers, parents, siblings, grandparents, etc.) because infants suffer most from pertussis. For more pertussis disease related information, go to CDC website (<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/surv-manual/chpt10-pertussis.html#vaccination>).

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